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♦EDITORIAL♦NOTES.♦

The Study of Biblical History.—There is, on the part of many ministers and of students preparing for the ministry, a lamentable ignorance of the most common characters and events of Bible History. That Abraham lived before Moses is generally known, but how long before, or the commonly accepted date of either of these Old Testament worthies *many*, if called upon outside of their study, would be unable to declare. The names of David and Solomon are familiar to all, but of the kings of either Israel or Judah, after the division, many are totally ignorant. Isaiah and Jeremiah may be friends, but the Minor Prophets are entire strangers to them. The Old Testament history, as related in Joshua, Judges, the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles is far less familiar to them than the history of Rome and Greece. Some of these men read philosophy and study science, but have no time for the study of God's dealings with his chosen people, a study from which more help might be derived than from any other single source. These men do not have, and indeed cannot have, any conception of the wealth of homiletical material here to be found. Nor is this strange. The study of *Biblical History* is not sufficiently emphasized. Colleges and universities in which the history of the nations, ancient and modern, is taught even in the most minute details, pass over contemptuously the history of that race by which the world's history has been most influenced and most benefited. Theological seminaries, founded for the purpose of training men in the knowledge of God, his Word, and his dealings with men, discuss deeply the question as to whether, in fact, God is knowable, spend much time in deciding whether the Bible is, after all, the word of God, and study minutely the history and causes of every heresy that has sprung up since Christianity was established, while God, as manifested in his Word, and the Word as giving God's ideas to men, or as a text-book of Old Testament Church-history are ignored. Ministers, the sons of godly parents, trained in Bible lore from childhood, know the Bible, and Bible-history. But men converted late in life, who have not enjoyed the advantages of this early training, in many cases go through their ministry ignorant of that which is most easily obtained, and of which, when obtained, would have served them to better purpose than all else that has been gained.

Should there not be a place for the study of Old Testament History in the college? Should not a most thorough acquaintance with it be required in the Divinity School? Should not ministers, who to-day are for the most part ignorant of all this set themselves to work in this line, and, perhaps, let Darwinism, and such studies rest for a time?

The Collection of Facts.—That which is most needed at the present time in the science of Old Testament criticism is a faithful and patient collection of the facts. Theories without number are appearing, but a large proportion of them are easily shown to be insufficient and false, because they do not account for *all* the facts. They have been hastily deduced from a *few* facts. The history of the Natural sciences should be of great service to the Bible scientist. In the various domains of research wonderful results are at frequent intervals announced; new theories are confidently promulgated, while the old theories are

laid away, broken to pieces by some newly discovered facts. When the facts are all collected, then the theories can be confidently formulated and not before.

The science of Biblical criticism, in the department of the Old Testament, at least, has not yet passed through the period of collecting the facts.

Wide sweeping statements are made, broad generalizations are constantly indulged in; conclusions are quickly reached; but the question must ever be asked in the face of these, What are the real facts in the case? And just here is a work in which all interested in Old Testament study may engage.

It may require specialists to deduce theories, and to detect the full significance of the facts after they are gathered, but it does not necessarily require a specialist to gather them. Any one who knows a fact when he sees it may busy himself in looking them out, and his labor cannot be valueless.

Just this kind of work is now especially needed, in very many lines of investigation in Old Testament facts. It is but necessary that the investigator proceed intelligently with his work.

It is believed that THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT furnishes the best means, not only of indicating the fields of truth that should be searched, but also of making known the facts as they are discovered.

This is a mission which belongs especially to THE STUDENT. And it is not proposed to hold back the facts because they may not be such as were anticipated, or because they disprove views that have been long cherished.

Of course it is not intended that the STUDENT should contain nothing but the barest, baldest recital of facts. Various views are being gained and various theories formulated, and the truth or falseness of these cannot be more quickly nor more certainly determined than by exposing them to the light of public scrutiny.

The facts should be gathered, the truth should be known. And the pages of the STUDENT will be open to make public the results of those who are seeking to gain these. The STUDENT is a medium, not an advocate. This has been its purpose from the first. When it becomes an advocate for any special views, or theories of any man or set of men, an advocate in such a sense that it refuses to admit to its columns any arguments or facts opposing these views or theories, whether they be orthodox or heterodox, conservative or liberal, it will then, as a partial pleader, cease to be valuable to those who seek for facts, instead of arguments to substantiate a theory. Let the facts be known.

The Overestimate of Criticism.—There are those who forget that the results of Biblical Criticism are largely negative. Broad-minded scholars are not inclined to allow supremacy to any one line of Bible study. It is a danger to which specialists in any department are liable that they overestimate their own methods and results. Criticism has done much to broaden our minds, prune away manifest errors in our conceptions of Bible truth and to put the facts in a new light. But its results are not to pass unchallenged simply because in this line they may seem to be unassailable. The whole structure reared by the critics must stand also the tests of historical, philosophical and theological investigation. This idea was most admirably put in the recent article in these pages from the hand of Prof. Schodde, who made a strong plea for the theological study of the Old Testament. Biblical Criticism is a means. Care should be taken lest it become an end in itself. It seems to be the serious conclusion of some of these able investigators—